



March 24, 2015

Representative Joe Schomacker
509 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Schomacker and Members of the House Aging & Long Term Care Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), the professional association of more than 10,000 physicians and physicians-in-training, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for HF 970 and HF 971, bills to expand access to and understanding of advance planning in end-of-life discussions within families.

All too often physicians are witness to the difficult scenarios presented when families have not had discussions with family members facing death. These instances are heartbreaking for surviving family members as they struggle to articulate what the patient would have wanted. It is widely recognized that in some situations, life-prolonging treatment may not be appropriate. Further, patients have the right to have a say in the care they receive. But a patient's wishes can only be honored when there is clarity about what that patient wants. Advance planning via living wills, health care directives, and other similar tools make that possible.

These are not easy decisions and simple discussions. But with their passage and funding, HF 970 and HF 971 would serve to make available to families the resources that can ease and help guide these conversations. At their center, these resources help families make clear decisions that accurately reflect their values and wishes while in a clear mind and relaxed state. Helping family members have these conversations ahead of time ensures they receive the care they desire.

Once again, thank you for your leadership in advancing efforts to make these important conversations easier for Minnesota families. The MMA strongly supports HF 970 and HF 971 and urges their passage.

Sincerely,

Donald M. Jacobs, MD, FACS
President
Minnesota Medical Association